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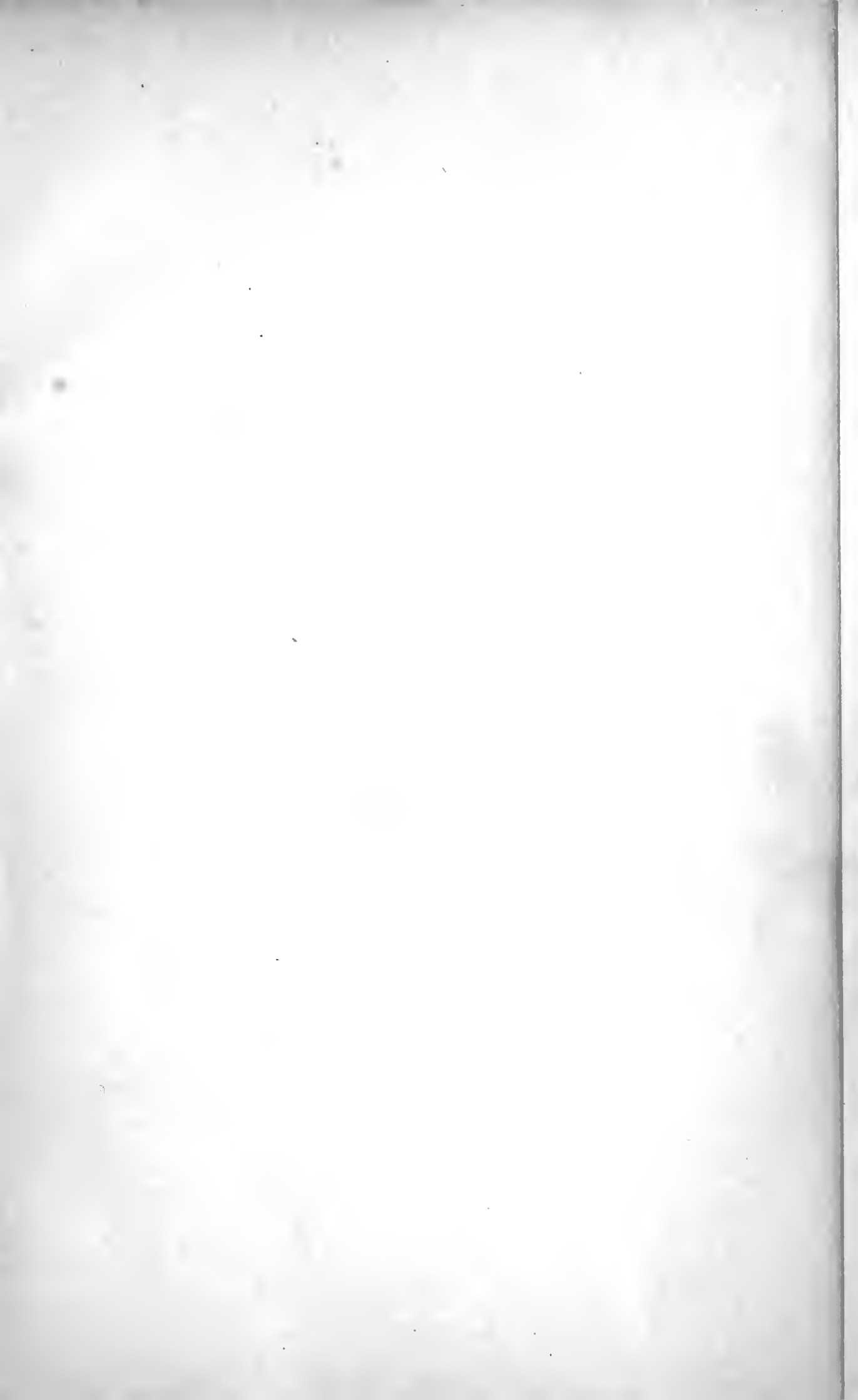
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

No 527

Deposited August 13. 1864
by
William P. Killdare
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HAUD IMMEMOR.

A FEW

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

OF

MR. THACKERAY

IN PHILADELPHIA.

Wm Bradford Reed,



(Privately Printed,)

WILLIAM P. KILDARE, 422 WALNUT STREET.

1864.

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HAUD IMMEMOR.

MR. THACKERAY, (who that has heard him, with sweetness of voice unequalled, speak of *Mr. Joseph Addison*, and *Mr. Congreve*, and *Mr. Fielding*, and *Mr. Atterbury*;—who that has read *Henry Esmond*, or the *Virginians*, will find fault with me for so describing him?) came to Philadelphia, on his first visit to America, in the month of January, 1853. My impression is that he brought very few letters of personal introduction, and was rather careless of what may be called “social success,” though anxious about the work he had in hand—his course of lectures on the English Humourists—and, as he used to say, “the dollars he wished to make, not for himself, but for those at home.” With, or without letters, he soon made friends, on the hearts of whom the news of his death has struck a sharp pang. As one of them, I venture to record a few memories of him who is gone.

The lectures were very successful here. There are two classes of people in every American microcosm—those who run after celebrities, and those, resolute not to be pleased, who run, as it were, against them. All were won or conquered by his simple naturalness; and, as I have said, the lectures were a great success.

My personal relations to him happened to become very intimate. He seemed to take a fancy to me and mine; and I certainly loved

him. He used to come to my house, not the abode of wealth or luxury, almost every day, and often more than once a day. He talked with my little children, and told them odd fairy tales; and I now see him (this was on his second visit) one day in Walnut Street, walking slowly along with my little girl by the hand; the tall, grey-headed, spectacled man, with an effort accommodating himself to the toddling child by his side; and then he would bring her home; and one day, when we were to have a great dinner given to him at the Club, and my wife was ill, and my household disarranged, and the bell rang, and I said to him: "I must go and carve the boiled mutton for the children, and take for granted you do not care to come;" and he got up, and, with a cheery voice, said: "I love boiled mutton, and children too, and I will dine with them," and we did; and he was happy, and the children were happy, and our appetite for the club dinner was damaged. Such was Thackeray in my home.

I met him once at the house of a friend, and there happened to be an odd collocation at the table. There was a guest, a man of brilliant talent, of mature age, and high education, measured at least by our American standard, who was distinguished by two peculiarities—his remarkable physical resemblance to Thackeray, and the fact that, although upwards of fifty years of age, born and bred in Kentucky, he had never crossed the Alleghanies before, and never, until that very day, seen a ship or any square-rigged vessel. They—the bright backwoodsman, who had never looked upon the ocean, and the veteran Londoner, who had made an India voyage before the days of steam, and had seen a fat man, in white clothes and a big straw hat, at Saint Helena, called "Buonaparte"—were a charming contrast.

The year 1863 carried both to their graves—one in Kensal Green and the other on the banks of the Ohio.

It was a bright moonlight night on which we (Thackeray and I) walked home from that dinner; and I remember well the walk and the place, for I seem to localize all my associations with him, and I asked him, what perhaps he might have thought, the absurd question: “What do you honestly think of my country; or, rather, what has most struck you in America? Tell me candidly, for I shall not be at all angry, or hurt if it be unfavourable, or too much elated, if it be not?” And then his answer, as he stopped, (we were walking along Penn Square), and turning round to me said: “You know what a virtue-proud people we English are? We think we have got it all to ourselves. Now, that which most impresses me here is, that I find homes as good as ours; firesides like ours; domestic virtues as gentle and pure; the English language, though the accent be a little different, with its home-like melodies; and the Common Prayer Book in your families. I am more struck by pleasant resemblances than by anything else.” And so I sincerely believe he was.

There was a great deal of dining out while “the great satirist,” as we used to address him, was here; but although always genial, I do not think, according to my recollection, he was a brilliant conversationalist. Those who expected much were often disappointed. It was in close, private intercourse, he was delightful. Once—it was in New York—he gave a dinner, at which I happened to be a guest, to what are called “literary men:”—authors, and lawyers, and actors (two very accomplished ones, and most estimable gentlemen, still living), and editors, and magazine men. There he made what seemed to be an effort. He talked for the table. He sang

some odd post-prandial songs; one, in a strange sort of "recitative," about Doctor Martin Luther. But, as I have said, it was an effort, and I liked him better at home and alone. It was on this occasion, or, rather, on our return journey to Philadelphia, that, on board the steamboat, (here again am I localizing,) he spoke to me of domestic sorrows and anxieties too sacred to be recorded here. He referred to a friend whose wife had been deranged for many years, hopelessly so; and never shall I forget the look, and manner, and voice with which he said to me, "It is an awful thing for her to continue so to live. It is an awful thing for her so to die. But has it never occurred to you, how awful a thing the recovery of lost reason must be, without the consciousness of the lapse of time? She finds the lover of her youth a grey-haired old man, and her infants young men and women. Is it not sad to think of this?" And yet it was this man whom vulgar-minded people called heartless! As he thus talked to me, I thought of lines of tenderness, often quoted, which no one but he could have written:

"Ah me! how quick the days are flitting;
 I mind me of a time that's gone,
 When here I'd sit, as now I'm sitting,
 In this same place, but not alone.
 A fair, young form was nestled near me;
 A dear, dear face looked fondly up,
 And sweetly spoke and smiled to cheer me,—
 'There's no one now to share my cup!'"

It is no part of this little memorial to refer to what may be called his public relations to Philadelphia, and his success as a lecturer. I merely record my recollection of the peculiar voice and cadence, the exquisite manner of reading poetry, the elocution, matchless in its

simplicity, his tranquil attitude—the only movement of his hands being when he wiped his glasses as he began and turned over the leaves of his manuscript—his gentle intonations. There was sweet music in his way of repeating the most hackneyed lines, which freshened them anew. I seem still to hear him say :

“ And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth.”

Or, in his lecture on Pope :

“ Lo ! thy dread empire, Chaos ! is restored ;
Light dies before thy uncreating word.
Thy hand, great Anarch ! lets the curtain fall,
And universal darkness buries all !”

But to resume my personal recollections. He was too sincere a man to talk for effect, or to pay common compliments ; and on his first visit to America, he seemed so happy, and so much pleased with all he met, that I fancied he might be tempted to come and, for a time, live amongst us. The British consulate in this city became vacant, the incumbent, Mr. William Peter, dying suddenly, and it seems from the following note, written at Washington, that I had urged him to take the place, if he could get it. I give the note exactly as it was written, venturing even to retain the names of those whom he kindly remembered, and Philadelphians of the old school will smile at the mis-spelling of the name of the founder of the Wistar parties of our ancient days. The ‘Wharton’ and ‘Lewis’ of the note are the late Thomas J. Wharton, and Mr. William D. Lewis, who, I hope, still cherishes kind recollections of happy and peaceful days.

*Mr. Anderson's Music Store, Penn'a Avenue,
Friday.*

MY DEAR REED :

(I withdraw the Mr. as wasteful and ridiculous excess) and thank you for the famous autograph, and the kind letter enclosing it, and the good wishes you form for me. There are half a dozen houses I already know in Philadelphia where I could find very pleasant friends and company ; and that good, old library would give me plenty of acquaintances more. But, home and my parents there, and some few friends I have made in the last 25 years, and a tolerably fair prospect of an honest livelihood on the familiar London flag stones, and the library at the Athenæum, and the ride in the Park, and the pleasant society afterwards ; and a trip to Paris now and again, and to Switzerland and Italy in the summer,—these are little temptations which make me not discontented with my lot, about which I grumble only for pastime, and because it is an Englishman's privilege. Own now that all these recreations here enumerated have a pleasant sound. I hope I shall live to enjoy them yet a little while, before I go to “Nox et domus exilis Plutonia,” whither poor, kind, old Peter has vanished. So that Saturday I was to have dined with him, and Mrs. Peter wrote, saying, he was ill with influenza, he was in bed with his last illness, and there were to be no more Whistler parties for him. Will Whistler himself, hospitable, pig-tailed shade, welcome him to Hades? And will they sit down—no, stand up—to a ghostly supper, devouring the *εφθιμους ψυχας* of oysters and all sorts of birds? I never feel pity for a man dying, only for survivors, if there be such, passionately deploring him. You see the pleasures the undersigned proposes to himself here in future

years—a fight of the Alps, a holiday on the Rhine, a ride in the Park, a colloquy with pleasant friends of an evening. If it is death to part with these delights (and pleasures they are and no mistake), sure the mind can conceive others afterwards; and I know one small philosopher who is quite ready to give up these pleasures; quite content (after a pang or two of separation from dear friends here), to put his hand into that of the Summoning Angel and say, ‘Lead on, O messenger of God our Father, to the next place whither the Divine Goodness calls us!’ We must be blindfolded before we can pass, I know; but I have no fear about what is to come, any more than my children need fear that the love of *their* father should fail them. I thought myself a dead man once, and protest the notion gave me no disquiet about myself—at least, the philosophy is more comfortable than that which is tinged with brimstone.

The Baltimoreans flock to the stale old lectures as numerously as you of Philadelphia. Here, the audiences are more polite than numerous; but the people who do come are very well pleased with their entertainment. I have had many dinners—Mr. Everett, Mr. Fish; our Minister, ever so often, the most hospitable of envoys. I have seen no one at all in Baltimore, for it is impossible to *do* the two towns together; and from this I go to Richmond and Charleston—not to New Orleans, which is too far. And I hope you will make out your visit to Washington, and that we shall make out a meeting more satisfactory than that dinner at New York, which did not come off. The combination failed which I wanted to bring about. Have you heard Miss Furness of Philadelphia sing? She is the very best ballad singer I ever heard. And will you please remember me to Mrs. Reed, and your brother, and Wharton, and Lewis, and his

pretty young daughter; and believe me, always faithfully yours,
 dear Reed,

W. M. THACKERAY.

The 'famous autograph' was, if my memory does not mislead me, a letter of Washington, for which he had expressed a wish, and which I gladly gave him; and the plan of coming to America, as will be seen, though at first rejected, seems to have taken root in his mind.

Thackeray left us in the winter of 1853, and in the summer of the year was on the Continent with his daughters. In the last chapter of 'The Newcomes,' published in 1855, he says: "Two years ago, walking with my children in some pleasant fields near to Berne, in Switzerland, I strayed from them into a little wood; and coming out of it, presently told them how the story had been revealed to me somehow, which, for three-and-twenty months, the reader has been pleased to follow." It was on this Swiss tour that he wrote me the following characteristic letter, filled with kindly recollections of convivial hours in Philadelphia, of headaches which he had contributed to administer, and of friends whose society he cherished. On the back of this note is a pen and ink caricature, of which he was not conscious when he began to write. It is what he alludes to as "the rubbishing picture which he didn't see." The sketch is very spirited, and, as a friend, to whom I have shown it, reminds me, evidently is the original of one of the illustrations of his grotesque fairy tale of "The Rose and the Ring," written, so he told a member of my family years afterwards, while he was watching and nursing his children, who were ill during this vacation ramble.

Neuchâtel, Switzerland, July 21, 1853

MY DEAR REED:

Though I am rather slow in paying the tailor, I always pay him; and as with tailors, so with men; I pay my debts to my friends, only at rather a long day. Thank you for writing to me so kindly, you who have so much to do. I have only begun to work ten days since, and now, in consequence, have a little leisure. Before, since my return from the West, it was flying from London to Paris, and *vice versa*—dinner right and left—parties every night. If I had been in Philadelphia, I could scarcely have been more feasted. Oh, you unhappy Reed! I see you, (after that little supper with McMichael) on Sunday, at your own table, when we had that good Sherry-Madeira, turning aside from the wine cup with your pale face! That cup has gone down this well so often, that I wonder the cup isn't broken, and the well as well as it is.

Three weeks of London were more than enough for me, and I feel as if I had had enough of it and pleasure. Then I remained a month with my parents; then I brought my girls on a little pleasuring tour. We spent ten days at Baden, when I set intrepidly to work again; and have been five days in Switzerland now; not bent on going up mountains, but on taking things easily. How beautiful it is! How pleasant! How great and affable, too, the landscape is! It's delightful to be in the midst of such scenes—the ideas get generous reflections from them. I don't mean to say my thoughts grow mountainous and enormous like the Alpine chain yonder—but, in fine, it is good to be in the presence of this noble nature. It is keeping good company; keeping away mean thoughts. I see in the papers now

and again accounts of fine parties in London. Bon Dieu! Is it possible any one ever wanted to go to fine London parties, and are there now people sweating in May-fair routs? The European Continent swarms with your people. They are not all as polished as Chesterfield. I wish some of them spoke French a little better. I saw five of them at supper, at Basse, the other night, with their knives down their throats. It was awful. My daughter saw it, and I was obliged to say: "My dear, your great-great grandmother, one of the finest ladies of the old school I ever saw, always applied cold steel to her victuals. It's no *crime* to eat with a knife," which is all very well: but I wish five of 'em at a time wouldn't.

Will you please beg McMichael, when Mrs. Glyn, the English tragic actress, comes to read Shakespeare in your city, to call on her—do the act of kindness to her, and help her with his valuable editorial aid? I wish we were going to have another night soon, and that I was going this very evening to set you up with a headache against to-morrow morning. By Jove, how kind you all were to me! How I like people, and want to see 'em again! You are more tender-hearted, romantic, sentimental, than we are. I keep on telling this to our fine people here, and have so belaboured your—

[Here the paper was turned, and the sketch revealed. At the top is written, "Pardon this rubbishing picture; but I didn't see, and can't afford to write page 3 over again."]

your country with praise in private that I sometimes think I go too far. I keep back some of the truth; but the great point to try and ding into the ears of the great, stupid, virtue-proud English public is, that there are folks as good as they in America. That's where Mrs. Stowe's book has done harm, by inflaming us with an idea of our

own superior virtue in freeing our blacks, whereas you keep yours. Comparisons are always odorous, Mrs. Malaprop says.

I am about a new story, but don't know as yet if it will be any good. It seems to me I am too old for story telling; but I want money, and shall get 20,000 dollars for this, of which (D. V.) I'll keep fifteen. I wish this rubbish [the sketch] were away; I might put written rubbish in its stead. Not that I have anything to say, but that I always remember you and yours, and honest Mac, and Wharton, and Lewis, and kind fellows who have been kind to me, and I hope will be kind to me again. Good bye, my dear Reed, and believe me, ever sincerely yours,

W. M. THACKERAY.

The next year, 1854, was a year of sorrow to me and mine. But for the sympathy which, in that overpowering grief, I had from my friend, I should not allude to it. My only surviving brother, Mr. Henry Reed, in company with his wife's sister, visited Europe, saw and were kindly treated by Mr. Thackeray; and on their return voyage, on the 24th of September, perished in the shipwreck of the Arctic. Thackeray had known my brother in this country, and duly estimated what I may be pardoned for describing as his gentle virtues, and refined and scholar-like tastes. He measured, too, the anguish which, even at this lapse of time, now nearly ten years, freshens when I think of it, and then bowed a whole family to the earth. It was in reply to my letter, announcing that all hope of escape or rescue was over, and that 'a vast and wandering grave was theirs,' that in November he wrote to me the following. It is an interesting letter, too, in this, that it mentions what may not be known on the

other side of the Atlantic, that he had had some transient diplomatic visions.

*36 Onslow Square, Brompton,
8th November.*

MY DEAR REED :

I receive your melancholy letter this morning. It gives me an opportunity of writing about a subject on which, of course, I felt very strongly for you, and for your poor brother's family. I have kept back writing, knowing the powerlessness of consolation, and having, I don't know what vague hopes that your brother and Miss Bronson might have been spared. That ghastly struggle over, who would pity any man that departs? It is the survivors one commiserates, of such a good, pious, tender-hearted man as he seemed whom God Almighty has just called back to Himself. He seemed to me to have all the sweet domestic virtues which make the pang of parting only the more cruel to those who are left behind : but that loss, what a gain to him ! A just man summoned by God, for what purpose can he go but to meet the Divine Love and Goodness? I never think about deploring such ; and as you and I send for our children, meaning them only love and kindness, how much more Pater Noster? So we say and weep the beloved ones whom we lose all the same with the natural selfish sorrow—as you, I dare say, will have a heavy heart when your daughter marries and leaves you. *You* will lose her, though her new home is ever so happy. I remember quite well my visit to your brother : the pictures in his room, which made me see which way his thoughts lay ; his sweet, gentle, melancholy, pious manner. That

day I saw them here in Dover Street, I don't know whether I told them, but I felt at the time that to hear their very accents affected me somehow; they were just enough American to be national; and where shall I ever hear voices in the world that have spoken more kindly to me? It was like being in your grave, calm, kind, old Philadelphia over again, and behold! now they are to be heard no more!

I only saw your brother once in London. When he first called I was abroad ill, and went to see him immediately I got your letter which he brought, and kept back, I think. We talked about the tour which he had been making; and about churches in this country which I knew interested him, and Canterbury especially, where he had been at the opening of a missionary college. He was going to Scotland, I think, and to leave London instantly, for he and Miss B. refused hospitality, etc.; and we talked about the Memoirs of Hester Reed, which I had found, I didn't know how, on my study table; and about the people whom he had met at Lord Mahon's; and I believe I said I should like to be going with him in the Arctic, and we parted with a great deal of kindness, please God, and friendly talk of a future meeting. May it happen one day, for I feel sure he was a just man. I wanted to get a copy of Esmond to send by him, (the first edition, which is the good one,) but I did not know where to light on one, having none myself; and a month since bought a couple of copies at a circulating library for 7s. 6d. a-piece.

I am to day just out of bed with the dozenth severe fit of spasms which I have had this year. My book would have been written but for them, and the lectures begun, with which I hope to make a few thousand more dollars for those young ladies. But who knows

whether I shall be well enough to deliver them, or what is in store for next year? The secretaryship of our legation at Washington was vacant the other day, and I instantly asked for it; but in the very kindest letter Lord Clarendon showed how the petition was impossible. First, the place was given away; next, it would not be fair to appoint out of the service. But the first was an excellent reason, not a doubt of it. So, if ever I come, as I hope and trust to do this time next year, it must be at my own cost, and not the Queen's.

Good bye, my dear Reed, and believe that I have the utmost sympathy in your misfortune, and am, most sincerely yours,

W. M. THACKERAY.

The copy of 'Esmond' was for my wife, who had expressed her liking for it beyond all his works. It came the next year thus inscribed:

Mr. Reed

With the grateful regards of

Wm Thackeray.

London, October 1855.

And is now among the most cherished volumes in our library.

In the winter of 1855 Mr. Thackeray made his second and last visit to this country, and gave us the first fruits of his new lecturing experiment—'The Georges.' I met him in New York and

heard his ‘George IV.’—to my mind the least agreeable of the course—delivered before a literary society in Brooklyn. He thence came to Philadelphia, and renewed his old intimacies and associations. His friends were glad to see him, and he them. The impression we all had was that two years had oldened him more than they should have done; but there was no change in other respects. ‘The Georges’ were, if possible, a greater success than ‘The Humourists,’ though I confess I had, and have, a lurking preference for the genial communion with Steele and Fielding, (his great favourites,) and Swift and Sterne, (his aversions,) to the dissection of the tainted remains of the Hanoverian Kings. But there was in one of these lectures a passage familiar to every listener and every reader, which I reproduce here, not merely from an association presently to be referred to, but because, it seems to me, that in transcribing it, I have the dead again before me, and hear a sweet voice in the very printed words :

“What preacher need moralize on this story; what words save the simplest are requisite to tell it? It is too terrible for tears. The thought of such a misery smites me down in submission before the Ruler of kings and men, the Monarch Supreme over empires and republics, the inscrutable Disposer of life, death, happiness, victory. O! brothers! speaking the same dear mother tongue—O! comrades! enemies no more, let us take a mournful hand together, as we stand by this royal corpse, and call a truce to battle! Low he lies to whom the proudest used to kneel once, and who was cast lower than the poorest; dead, whom millions prayed for in vain. Driven off his throne; buffeted by rude hands; with his children in revolt; the darling of his old age killed before him untimely; our Lear hangs over her breathless lips and cries: ‘Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little!’

‘ Vex not his ghost !—O let him pass.—He hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer !’

Hush ! strife and quarrel, over the solemn grave ! Sound, trumpets, a mournful march ! Fall, dark curtain, upon his pageant, his pride, his grief, his awful tragedy !”

Was it this, or was it the other passage about the princess Amelia, and the old King praying for returning reason, which Thackeray referred to in the following note, written to me from Baltimore in answer to one sending an adverse criticism in a small newspaper in Philadelphia ?

Baltimore, Jan. 16, 1856.

MY DEAR REED :

Your letter of the 9th, with one from Boston of the 8th, was given to me last night when I came home. In what possible snow-drift have they been lying torpid ? One hundred thanks for your goodness in the lecture, and all other matters ; and if I can find the face to read those printed lectures over again, I'll remember your good advice. That splendid crowd on the last lecture night, I knew, would make our critical friend angry. I have not seen the last article, of course, and don't intend to look for it. And as I was reading the George III. lecture here on Monday night, could not help asking myself, “ What can the man mean by saying that I am uncharitable, unkindly, that I sneer at virtue,” and so forth ? My own conscience being pretty clear I can receive the Bulletin's displeasure with calmness—remembering how I used to lay about me in my own youthful days, and how I generally took a good, tall mark to hit at.

Wicked weather, and an opera company which performed on the two first lecture nights here, made the audiences rather thin; but they fetched up at the third lecture, and to-night is the last; after which I go to Richmond—then to go farther south, from Charleston to Havannah and New Orleans; perhaps to hark back and try westward, where I know there is a great crop of dollars to be reaped. But to be snow-bound in my infirm condition! I might never get out of the snow alive.

I go to Washington to-morrow for a night. I was there and dined with Crampton on Saturday. He was in good force and spirits, and I saw no signs of packing up, or portmanteaux in the hall.

I send my very best regards to Mrs. Reed and your sister-in-law, and Lewis and his kind folks, and to Mac's whisky punch, which gave *me* no headache. I'm very sorry it treated you so unkindly.

Always yours, dear Reed,

W. M. THACKERAY.

The allusion in this letter to the printed lectures recalls a little incident which was very illustrative of his generous temper, and is not unlike 'the pill-box with the guineas,' which I have seen lately in some literary notices. It was this: On his return to Philadelphia, in the spring of 1856, from the South and West, a number of his friends—I, as much as any one—urged him, unwisely as it turned out, to repeat his lectures on the 'Humourists.' He was very loath to do it, but finally yielded, being, I doubt not, somewhat influenced by the pecuniary inducements accidentally held out to him. A young bookfeller of this city offered him a round sum, not very large, but, under the circumstances, quite liberal, for the course, which

he accepted. The experiment was a failure. It was late in the season, with long days and shortening nights, and the course *was* a stale one, and the lectures had been printed, and the audiences were thin, and the bargain was disastrous, not to him, but to the young gentleman who had ventured it. We were all disappointed and mortified; but Thackeray took it good humouredly—the only thing that seemed to disturb him being his sympathy with the man of business. “I don’t mind the empty benches, but I cannot bear to see that sad, pale-faced young man as I come out, who is losing money on my account.” This he used to say at my house, when he came home to a frugal and not very cheerful supper after the lectures. Still, the bargain had been fairly made, and was honourably complied with, and the money was paid and remitted, through my agency, to him at New York. I received no acknowledgment of the remittance, and recollect well that I felt not a little annoyed at this; the more so when, on picking up a newspaper, I learned that Thackeray had failed for home. The day after he had gone, when there could be no refusal, I received from him a certificate of deposit on his New York bankers for an amount quite sufficient to make up any loss incurred, as he thought in his behalf. I give the accompanying note, merely suppressing the name of the gentleman in question. There are some little things in this note—its blanks and dashes—to which a fac-simile alone would do justice.

24th April.

MY DEAR REED:

When you get this . . . Remember-ember me to ki-ki-kind friends, . . . a sudden resolution . . . to-mor-row in

the Baltic!— . . . Good-bye, my dear, kind friend, and all kind friends in Philadelphia. I didn't think of going away when I left home this morning—but it's the best way.

I think it right to send back twenty-five per cent. to poor H——. Will you kindly give him the enclosed; and depend upon it I shall go and see Mrs. Boott, '(my wife's aged grandmother, then residing in England,)' when I get to London, and tell her all about you. My heart is uncommonly heavy; and I am yours, gratefully and affectionately,

W. M. T.

And thus, with an act and words of kindness, he left America, never to return!

It was during this visit to the United States that, as he told me, the idea of his American novel, 'The Virginians,' was conceived; and I have reason to think that some of the details in the story were due as well to Mr. Prescott's 'Crossed Swords' as to conversations with me at a time when my mind was full of historical associations and suggestions, and when to think of my country's story was matter of pride and pleasure. In the letter of November, 1854, on my brother's death, Mr. Thackeray speaks of 'The Memoirs of Hester Reed,' which he had found on his study table. This was a little volume, privately printed a few years before, containing the biography of my paternal grandmother, Esther De Berdt, a young English girl, who had made the acquaintance of her American lover when, in colony times, he was a student in the Temple. They married, came to this country; he became a soldier of the Revolution, and she, sharing her husband's feelings, and opinions,

and trials, died, still a young woman, in the middle of the war. As I have said, Esther Reed was my father's mother. Mr. Thackeray seemed pleased with the genuineness of the little book, and talked often of it. The names 'Hetty' and 'Theodosia,' (the latter, I believe, in his family also,) which appear in 'The Virginians,' are to be found in my homely narrative of Revolutionary times. One other suggestion I trace in 'The Virginians.' I recollect, in one of our rambles, telling him of a book which he did not seem to know—and I can hardly say that it is to my credit that I did—'The Memoirs of the Duke de Lauzun.' We spoke of the dispute as to its genuineness, (its authenticity as a record of the intrigues of a courtier of Louis XV. there was no reason to doubt,) and I called his attention to the fact, very creditable to my country-women of ancient days, that, while Lauzun's life, not only in France, where it was natural enough, but in England, was a continuity of atrocious licentiousness, with his victims' names revealed, as only a Frenchman of that day was capable of doing, the moment he lands in America, accompanying Rochambeau's army to Rhode Island, the wicked spirit seems rebuked by the purity and simplicity of American women; and though he mentions the names of several ladies whom he met, there is not a word of indecorum, or a whispered thought of impurity. This idea the reader will find stated in 'The Virginians' thus:

"There lived, during the last century, a certain French Duke and Marquis, who distinguished himself in Europe and America likewise, and has obliged posterity by leaving behind him a choice volume of memoirs, which the gentle reader is specially warned not to consult. Having performed the part of Don Juan in his own country, in ours, and in other parts of Europe, he has kindly noted down the names

of many court beauties who fell victims to his powers of fascination; and very pleasing, no doubt, it must be for the grandsons and descendants of the fashionable persons amongst whom our brilliant nobleman moved, to find the names of their ancestresses adorning M. le Duc's sprightly pages, and their frailties recorded by the candid writer who caused them. In the course of the peregrinations of this nobleman, he visited North America, and, as had been his custom in Europe, proceeded straightway to fall in love. And curious it is to contrast the elegant refinements of European society, where, according to Monseigneur, he had but to lay siege to a woman in order to vanquish her, with the simple lives and habits of the colonial folks, amongst whom this European enslaver of hearts did not, it appears, make a single conquest. Had he done so, he would as certainly have narrated his victories in Pennsylvania and New England, as he described his successes in this and his own country. Travellers in America have cried quite loudly enough against the rudeness and barbarism of transatlantic manners; let the present writer give the humble testimony of his experience, that the conversation of American gentlemen is generally modest, and, to the best of his belief, the lives of the women pure."

'The Virginians' appeared in monthly numbers whilst I was absent on my mission to China in 1858, and there I read it. In the tone of, I hope, pardonable egotism in which I have thus far written, I transcribe an entry in the little diary I kept in the East for the amusement of my wife and family at home.

"*Friday, July 23.—Shanghai.*—Read to-day No. VII. of 'The Virginians.' I still like it, though I fear my friend Lord Chesterfield will fare badly. I don't care what is said about old Q. or any of

the Selwyn party. In one of his letters (this I have lost or mislaid, or some felonious autograph hunter has purloined it) to me long ago, Thackeray, when he was projecting 'The Virginians,' told me he should use 'Esther DeBerdt,' and now I see his heroines are Hetty and Theodosia, and from the same rank of life—almost the only pure one then—to which my 'Hetty' belonged. But what beautiful, heart-firring things one meets in his books. I can't help copying one: 'Can'st thou, O! friendly reader, count upon the fidelity of an artless or tender heart or two, and reckon among the blessings which Heaven hath bestowed on thee, the love of faithful women? Purify thy own heart, and try to make it worthy theirs. On thy knees—on thy knees—give thanks for the blessings awarded thee! All the prizes of life are nothing compared with that one. All the rewards of ambition, pleasure, wealth—only vanity and disappointment, grasped at greedily and fought for fiercely—and over and over again found worthless by the weary winners. But love seems to survive life, and to reach beyond it. I think we take it with us past the grave. Do we not still give it to those who have left us? May we not hope that they feel it for us, and that we shall leave it here in one or two fond bosoms when we also are gone.' You will think I have very little to do, or record, to have time to make so long extracts; but I could not help it, for the magic words touched me."

On my appointment to China, Thackeray was among the first to congratulate me, at the same time begging me—as he seemed to take for granted that my route to the East would be what, by an odd misnomer, is called the 'overland'—to stop with him in London. I went, however, by the Cape of Good Hope; and it was not till my return, in the spring of 1859, that we met again. From Malta,

or some point on the Continent, I wrote to ask him, having due regard to economy, my party being numerous, and to the odour of official station which still hung round me, to get me suitable lodgings in London, and the following perfectly characteristic note was the answer:

*Maurigy's Hotel, 1 Regent Street, Waterloo Place,
April 2, 1859.*

MY DEAR REED:

This is the best place for you, I think. Two Bishops already in the house. Country gentlefolks and American envoys especially affect it. Mr. Maurigy says you may come for a day at the rate of ten guineas a week, with rooms very clean and nice, which I have just gone over, and go away at the day's end, if you disapprove.

The enclosed note is about the Athenæum, where you may like to look in. I wrote to Lord Stanhope, who is on the committee, to put you up.

I won't bore you by asking you to dinner till we see how matters are, as of course you will consort with bigger wigs than yours, always,

W. M. THACKERAY.

No 'bigger wigs' came between us. During my fortnight in London—for I was hastening home after two years absence—we saw him nearly every day. He came regularly to our quarters, went with me to the Athenæum—that spot of brilliant association—where he pointed out the eminent men of whom I had heard and read; and then he would go to his working table in the Club Library and write for the 'Cornhill,' to which he said he had sold himself to slavery.

for two years. He would carry my son, a young man just of age, off with him to see the London world in odd 'haunts.' I dined with him twice—once at his modest house, No. 36 Onslow Square, where we had the great pleasure of seeing his daughters, and once at Greenwich, at a bachelor's dinner, where I made the acquaintance, since ripened into intimacy, of another friend, who will, I am sure, excuse this distant allusion to him. We looked out on the Park and the river, where the Great Eastern was lying before her first voyage, and talked of America and American associations, and of the chance of his coming again when the magazine slavery was at an end, and our last dinner was over. I left London on the afternoon of the 30th of April, 1859. Mr. and Miss Thackeray were at the Euston Square station to say farewell. He took my son aside and, to his infinite confusion, handed him a little *cadeau*, which I hope he will always cherish with pride for the sake of the giver. "We parted with a great deal of kindness, please God, and friendly talk of a future meeting. May it happen one day, for I feel sure he was a just man."

My pious duty is nearly done. On my return to America our correspondence, naturally enough, languished; each was much occupied; he with drudgery which was exhausting and engrossing. I often received kind messages, and sometimes apologies. After the Civil War began, no letter passed between us. I had not the heart to write, and I do not believe that he had; for I reject with emphasis the idea that his gentle nature could feel aught but horror at this war of brethren—"brothers speaking the same dear mother tongue." More than any Englishman of letters I have ever known, he was free from that sentimental disease of 'Abolitionism.' His American novel, and his pictures of life in ancient days at Castlewood, on the

Potomac, show this abundantly. His estimate of Mrs. Stowe's evil-omened fiction, in one of the letters I have given, shows it. He had been in the South, and met Southern ladies and gentlemen, the highest types of American civilization. This I may say now in their hour of suffering and possible disaster. He had visited Southern homes, which the bloody hand of wanton outrage has since defecrated, and shared Southern hospitality, and no word, that I am aware of, ever fell from his lips, or his pen, which showed sympathy or approval of the crusade which has tumbled the American Union in bloody ruin.

As recently as February, 1862, in one of his fugitive essays, he incidentally referred to an incident of our days of sorrow, and thus embalmed his affectionate regard for a distant friend on whom the hand of arbitrary power was, or was supposed to be, laid. I have reason to believe the reference was to a gentleman, long a resident of Savannah.

"I went to the play one night, and protest I hardly know what was the entertainment which passed before my eyes. In the next stall was an American gentleman who knew me. . . . And the Christmas piece which the actors were playing proceeded like a piece in a dream. To make the grand comic performance doubly comic, my neighbour presently informed me how one of the best friends I had in America—the most hospitable, kindly, amiable of men, from whom I had twice received the warmest welcome and the most delightful hospitality—was a prisoner in Fort Warren, on charges by which his life might be risked. I think it was the most dismal Christmas piece which these eyes ever looked on."

And so I have every reason to believe it was throughout.

One other memorandum I did receive from my friend. In the summer of 1863, an Anglo-Indian officer brought me the following note, written on one of the little book slips used in the Reading Room of the British Museum.

Permission to use the Reading Room will be withdrawn from any person who shall write or make marks on any part of a printed book or manuscript belonging to the Museum.

| Press Mark. | Heading and Title of the Work wanted. | Size. | Place. | Date. |
|-------------|---|-------|--------|-------|
| | At Sight Pay any kindness you can to the Bearer Major F. Goldsmid and debit the same to your old friend | | | |

(Date)

W M Shackeray (Signature).

_____ (Number of the Reader's Seat).

Please to restore each volume of the Catalogue to its place, as soon as done with.

Hon^{ble}. W. B. Reed Philadelphia

My little Memorial is finished. I have written it in a frame of mind distracted by all that, in these last few days, has been going on around me, with two objects: one to embalm, I trust not unpleasantly to any one, the memories I happen to have of a friend who was dear to me; the other, to try, by a desperate intellectual effort, to throw aside, if but for a moment, (and the date will show why I feel so,) the burthen of consciousness that bloody deeds are now doing which will bring new sorrow into many a home, and whose fruits may

be the downfall of the little that is left of the constitutional liberties of my country.

W. B. R.

CHESTNUT HILL, NEAR PHILADELPHIA, }
May 14, 1864. }

P. S.—I have read everything I could put my hands on that has appeared in England and this country on Thackeray's death. The notice which most impressed me was the following, which I am tempted to reprint. It may be that the collocation in it, with Thackeray's, of another name—that of an eminent man, with whom I was closely associated at a very happy period of my life, I mean Lord Elgin—gives it this interest for me. He, too, died in the fatal 1863.

“THACKERAY. Just now the mails are going out. A hundred splendid steam ships are speeding swiftly over every sea, east, west, and north, from the omphales called London, to carry the fortnight's instalment of British history and British thought into every land where the English language is spoken. But the saddest news they carry—sadder news than they have carried for many a month—is the announcement of the death of William Thackeray. It will come first to New York, where they loved him as we did. And the *flaneurs* of the Broadway, and even the busy men in Wall Street, will stay their politics and remember him. They will say, ‘Poor Thackeray is dead.’ Though they may refuse to hear the truth—though they choose to insult us beyond endurance at stated times—let us keep one thing in mind: the flags in New York were hung half-mast high when Havelock died. Let us remember that. And so the news will travel southward. Some lean, lithe, deer-eyed lad will sneak, run swiftly, pause to listen, and then hold steadily forward across the desolate war-wasted space, between the Federal lines and the smouldering watchfires of the Confederates, carrying the news brought by the last mail from Europe, and will come

to a knot of calm, clear-eyed, lean-faced Confederate officers (oh! that such men should be wasted in such a quarrel, for the sin was not theirs after all); and one of these men will run his eye over the telegrams, and will say to the others, 'Poor Thackeray is dead.' And the news will go from picket to picket, along the limestone ridges which hang above the once happy valleys of Virginia, and will pass south, until Jefferson Davis—the man so like Stratford de Redcliffe—the man of the penetrating eyes and of the thin, close-set lips—the man with the weight of an empire on his shoulders—will look up from his papers and say, with heartfelt sorrow 'The author of *The Virginians* is dead.' High upon the hill-side at Simla there will stand soon a group of English, Scotch, and Irish gentlemen, looking over the great plain below, and remarking to one another how much the prospect had changed lately, and how the grey-brown jungle has been slowly supplanted by the brilliant emerald green of the cotton plant, and by a thousand threads of silver water from the irrigation trenches. They will be hoping that Lawrence will succeed poor Lord Elgin, and that he will not be sacrificed in that accursed Calcutta; they will be wondering how it fares with Crawley. Then a dawk will toil up the hill-side with the mail; and in a few minutes they will be saying, 'Lawrence is appointed; Crawley is acquitted, but poor Thackeray is dead.' The pilot, when he comes out in his leaping whaleboat, and boards the mail steamer as she lies-to off the headlands which form the entrance gates to our new Southern Empire, will ask the news of the captain; and he will be told, 'Lord Elgin and Mr. Thackeray are dead.' That evening they will know it in Melbourne, and it will be announced at all the theatres; the people, dawdling in the hot streets half the night through, waiting for the breaking up of the weather, will tell it to one another and talk of him. The sentence which we have repeated so often that it has lost half its meaning, will have meaning to them. 'William Thackeray is dead!' So the news will fly through the seventy million souls who speak the English language. And he will lie cold and deaf in his grave, unconscious, after all his work, of his greatest triumph; unconscious that the great so-called Anglo-Saxon race little knew how well they loved him till they lost him. 'Vanitas vanitatum! Let us shut up the box and the puppets, for the play is played out.'"

H. K.—*Macmillan*.

As these sheets are passing through the press, a friend has placed in my hands the following Philadelphia note, written in 1853. I have his permission to print it :

Girard House, Jan. 23, 1853.

MY DEAR MR. BIDDLE,

This note is written with your gold pen, which suits me to a nicety, and which I shall value always as a token of the goodwill and friendliness of the kind giver. I believe I have never written for popularity, but God forbid I should be indifferent to such marks of esteem and confidence as now and then fall to my share, when scholars and good men are pleased with my works. I am thankful to have shaken your kind hand, and to carry away your good opinion. Please God, the gold pen shall tell no lies while it lives with me. As for the splendid case, I shall put it into my childrens' museum. I know how pleased and proud they will be at any such tokens of friendship shown to their father.

Believe me always, my dear sir, your faithful and obliged

W. M. THACKERAY.

TO CLEMENT C. BIDDLE, Esq.,
Spruce St., n. 13th.











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